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[EXTERNAL] Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

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To: "blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov" <blm_ak_coastalplain_EIS@blm.gov>

I grew up in Michigan and moved to Alaska in 1996, shortly after finishing college. I got job working at a fish hatchery in Prince William Sound. I loved it. The wilderness was amazing in its beauty and is treasure far beyond any monetary value. As amazing and pristine as it appeared to me, other people who had been there before the Exxon Valdez, told me I should have seen it before the oil spill. Some species still had not recovered to pre spill population numbers. The road through the tunnel to Whittier was completed a few years after my arrival. I can tell you that increased traffic into the Sound has had an impact on the wilderness, wildlife , and the resources.

After being in Alaska a few years I started to explore other areas of the state. One of them was ANWR. As I traveled from Anchorage to Fairbanks and further north several people along the way asked me where I was going. When I explained my going to the Arctic, every one of them, cab driver, waitress, store clerk, and flight attendant, all said the same thing: "You should have seen it before the pipeline." As in the Sound, I thoroughly enjoyed the wilderness, the wildlife, the natural beauty, a sense that in that place nature is the priority. A place where we as humans, have decided that money is not the most important all determining factor in life. That there are places and things that have a greater value than the dollar sign and numbers placed next them.

Industry and development do have an impact on the wildlife and wilderness, and its not pretty. I do not support development of ANWR on the coastal plain or anywhere else within in it. Do we as humans really have to ruin every piece of real estate in our country? To build roads, erect oil rigs and pipelines in this area will ruin it. The little I have traveled in the arctic plain, (I have spent a total of about 6 weeks in three different trips) I have seen plenty of evidence of mans exploration already. Please don't put bigger human imprint on this area than we already have. It is not necessary for the United States, Alaska, or humans. Lets preserve a little piece of wilderness. Now the concept of little is different in the Arctic. Being a harsh climate more space is needed for migratory animals such as caribou, waterfowl, and polar bears. They need this space, and we as humans need to have some space to connect to the wilderness. Although many people will not go there, just knowing that it is there, and allowing them to have the dream of maybe one day exploring a place that is true wilderness is worth keeping it as it is. Lets not steal this from everyone living today and in the future. Do not take this dream away from us.

Timothy J. VanGelderren Jr.